

THALICTRUM AMETRUM GREENE: AN INTERESTING NOMENCLATURAL CASE

LEON CROIZAT

The validity of *Thalictrum polycarpum* S. Wats. against the earlier *T. polycarpum* Loret, and the later *T. ametrum* Greene has been affirmed by Wheeler (Rhodora 40: 318-320. 1938) in a discussion which is exceedingly interesting under the standpoint of nomenclature. In this discussion Wheeler raises two issues, first, whether the parenthetic author must be indicated in every case; second, whether an earlier name can be duplicated, and if so under what conditions.

Lack of space makes it necessary for me to discuss here only one of these issues. Accordingly, I shall discuss the second, which is more important.

The first printed mention of *Thalictrum polycarpum* occurs in a paper by Loret (Bull. Soc. Bot. France 6: 16. 1859). To spare the reader the necessity of wading through Loret's stiff French, but doing violence to accepted bibliographical standards, I shall quote here as if in the original my own translation of this publication. Loret states: "I have collected in a hedge at Barcelonnette (Basses-Alpes) at the end of July 1851 an interesting *Thalictrum* which is quite noteworthy on account of its short-ovoid carpels, 9-12 to 14 being borne upon a single receptacle. This plant is close to, but differs appreciably from *T. Jacquinianum* Koch and *T. expansum* Jord. I believe this *Thalictrum* to be a new species, but, fearing to augment the confusion already prevalent in this genus, I merely bring this plant to the attention of the botanists who may have the opportunity of collecting at Barcelonnette, hoping on my part to see this plant again on the spot. If I were to be allowed to give this plant a name, I would gladly call it *T. polycarpum* or, better still, *T. multiflorum* (S'il m'était réservé de lui imposer un nom, je lui donnerais volontier celui de *Th. polycarpum* ou mieux *multiflorum*)."

The binomials of Loret have been disregarded by practically every author, with the exception of Lecoyer. In his monograph of *Thalictrum* (Bull. Soc. Bot. Belg. 24: 78-324. 1885), Lecoyer treats *T. polycarpum* as a synonym of *T. multiflorum* (op. cit., 304), which he places in the synonymy of *T. minus* L. Lecoyer adds (op. cit., 297) that *T. multiflorum* is "une forme non décrite" of *T. minus*, believing *T. multiflorum* to be a *nomen nudum* or a *nomen seminudum* which has *T. polycarpum* as its synonym.

Wheeler is of the opinion, on the contrary, that *T. polycarpum* and *T. multiflorum* "is an illegitimate name of the type known as a *nomen provisorium*," without specifying which one of these two binomials he interprets as the provisional name. I do not believe it necessary to argue the status of these binomials at this point, because the matter has little immediate importance. The impor-

tant side of Wheeler's interpretation is in his statement that: "Provisional names are not only illegitimate but are not validly published. *Since they are not validly published they cannot as earlier homonyms, invalidate a later name*" (italics mine).

This statement contains an unmitigated fallacy. *Thalictrum polycarpum* is illegitimate because it duplicates *T. minus* L. (Art. 16, Art. 60[1] Amsterdam Code), and is invalid, in addition, at least because it is published as a synonym of *T. multiflorum* (Art. 40). Article 61 in the current Rules states: "Even if the earlier homonym is illegitimate, or is generally treated as a synonym on taxonomic grounds, the later homonym must be rejected." This is clear enough: *T. polycarpum* Loret is not only illegitimate and invalid but has been treated as a synonym of *T. minus* L. on taxonomic grounds by Lecoyer. Obviously, *T. polycarpum* Loret, 1859, as an earlier homonym renders illegitimate *T. polycarpum* S. Wats., 1879. The text of Article 61 and the status of the binomials both of Loret and Watson precisely and absolutely contradict Wheeler's affirmations.

Since Wheeler's error rests upon assumptions which are unfortunately widespread, it is advisable to add here a few words of comment. Many are the taxonomists who believe that a name which is not "valid" may be "ignored." This belief involves a fundamental confusion between two different concepts, which can easily be illustrated by an example. Let us suppose that John Doe publishes in 1940 *Planta una* without a Latin description. This binomial is invalid, because Article 38 of the Amsterdam Code requires a Latin diagnosis for a valid publication. Accordingly, Jack Roe can freely use the type specimen of *P. una* and propose on it in 1942 a new binomial, *P. quaevis*. Roe can do this because the publication of Doe does not "exist" as valid nomenclature on account of the lack of a Latin diagnosis. Of course, Roe, if he so wishes, can honor the earlier invalid binomial proposed by Doe, effectively publishing *P. una* with a Latin diagnosis. In this case (Art. 48), the species will be known as *P. una* J. Doe *in* (or *ex*) J. Roe.

An entirely different state of affairs obtains if J. Roe attempts to publish in 1942 a new species, naming it *P. una* and basing it upon a type specimen other than the one originally used by J. Doe in 1940 for his *P. una*. *Such a duplication is expressly forbidden by Article 61, as it has been seen.* Under the Vienna Code (1905) and Bruxelles Code (1910) it was not permitted to reject a well known name, "Because of the existence of an earlier homonym which is universally regarded as non-valid or for any other motive either contestable or of little import" (Art. 50, Vienna and Bruxelles Codes). The motives behind this Article were lofty, no doubt, but its practical application led to countless controversies and abuses, because the generality embodied in the Article was not accompanied by an elucidation of what was meant as an

homonym "universally regarded as non-valid," and what were "motives contestable or of little import." Naturally, everybody thought of his own motives as being true and relevant, and of those of his opponents as "contestable or of little import." To remedy this situation, the text now embodied by Article 61 was approved by the Cambridge Congress of 1930. Space forbids my entering into details, but I may at least point out that Miss L. Green, who is well informed on everything that was proposed and voted upon at Cambridge, states in her authoritative commentary on nomenclature (Emp. For. Jour. 10: 68. 1931) that: "*All* later homonyms should be rejected even if the earlier homonym is not an accepted name" (*italics in Miss Green's text*).

Much confusion reigns as to the meaning of *invalidity* as distinct from *illegitimacy* in the sense of the Rules, for the very good reason that the Rules themselves use these terms in a loose and contradictory manner. Examples of this confusion are rife in the Amsterdam Code, and one at least may be cited here. Article 2 defines as *illegitimate*, names or forms contrary to an Article, and states that such names cannot be maintained. Article 63, on its part, prescribes that the name of a taxonomic group "must be rejected when its application is uncertain". Since such a name [*nomen dubium*] "must be rejected," it stands to reason that this name is *illegitimate* under the definition given in Article 2. However, Recommendation xxxvii which immediately follows Article 63 authorizes the certification of a *nomen dubium* following an adequate taxonomic study made on the basis of new evidence (Art. 17, Rec. iii, Rec. xxxvii). Thus, Article 63 errs in stating that a *nomen dubium* "must be rejected," branding it implicitly as *illegitimate*. Such a name is merely *invalid*, proof of this being the fact that this name can be used legitimately under certification.

Since the Rules themselves are not clear as to the proper use of *validity* and *legitimacy*, it would be useless to argue here Wheeler's contention that a *nomen provisorium* is both invalid and illegitimate. Sooner or later, a fundamental debate is bound to take place in a Botanical Congress about these concepts. Meanwhile, I may contribute here a brief comment as to the meaning of *validity* and *illegitimacy*, once again using an example.

As it is well known, the law orders that a testament must conform with certain specified requirements, a part of the estate of the deceased going automatically to certain parties by reason of their being related with the author of the will. If the will is drawn *against* the law and, for instance, the estate is distributed in a manner which is forbidden by law, the will is *illegitimate*, and as such *it cannot be maintained*. A will, conversely, may be drawn *according to the law*, but before it takes effect it must go through the procedure of probating, and is not *valid* until probated. *The probating of a will is exactly the same procedure as the valid publica-*

tion of a taxonomic name. Neither a will nor a taxonomic name is *valid* until it is probated or published according to the laws of the land or the Articles of the Rules of Nomenclature. Naturally, neither a will nor a taxonomic name is *legitimate* if it violates the law of the land or the Articles. A will that violates the law and a name that violates an Article may be unimpeachable as to form, but can neither be probated nor maintained *because they are faulty as to substance*. This, in a nutshell, is the distinction that can briefly be made here between the concept of *validity* and that of *legitimacy*. It is high time that the Articles be carefully revised and amended in order that they be purged of pointless and confusing abuses of the proper terms ultimately leading to a flood of mistaken comments in the literature.

The following synonymy is in order:

THALICTRUM AMETRUM Greene in Muhlenbergia 5: 129. 1909.
T. polycarpum S. Wats. in Proc. Am. Acad. Sc. 14: 288. 1879;
 Jepson, Fl. Calif. 1: 530. 1922; Munz, Man. South. Calif. Bot.,
 173. 1935; Wheeler in Rhodora 40: 318-320. 1938. *Non*
Loret.

Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University,
 Jamaica Plain, Mass.,
 March 3, 1942.

UNA NUEVA ESPECIE DE PINUS MEXICANO

MAXIMINO MARTÍNEZ

Pinus Douglasiana sp. nov. Arbor 20 m. alta; diametros 30-50 cm.; coma densa rotundata. Cortex leviter scabris, rubescens, 2 cm. crassus, squamatus. Rami expansa; ramuli brunneo rubescentis, valde scabri. Folia 5, triangularia, crassa, rectiuscula, pungentia, 25-33 cm. longa, marginibus denso serrulato, claro virore vel galbinus coloris, fulgentia, intus glauco in folia juniora. Hypoderma biformis usque endoderma penetrabilis, chlorenquima partitus; fascies-exterius endodermi incrassatus. Ductus resiniferi 3 in parenchymatis parte siti; fascies fibrovasculares 2, approximati, patentibus. Vaginae persistentes, 20-30 mm. longae, squamatae, castanei rubescens, dein obscuro castanei. Strobilis junioribus erectis violaceo fuscus, subterminalibus, oblongis attenuatis, obtusis; squamae crassae, apex expansus vel erectus. Strobili maturi ovoidei, leviter asymetricus, deflexi, paulum incurvati, in apex attenuati, fusco rubescens coloris, cadivus, 7.5-10.5 cm. longis, terni vel quini. Pedunculi 12 mm. incurvi ad strobili adnatus. Squamae 28-30 mm. longae, 15 mm. latae; apex irregulariter, obtuso vel rotundato; umbo subquadrangulo vel polyangulatus, carina transversa patente, carina longitudinali depressa, fere complanata in basis strobili. Cuspide complanata, paulum patente, mucro cadivo. Semina obscura fere ovoidea, 5 mm. longa, ala 25 mm. longa 8 mm. lata, brunnea. Lignum molle, album; resina fere nulla.